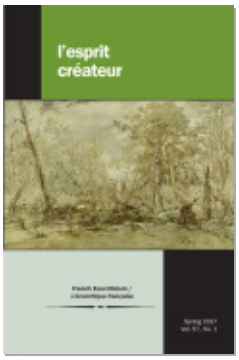
Bernard Werber's Poetics of Ecological Reconstruction: "In Praise of Amnesia"?



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IN 1995, LAWRENCE BUELL proposed criteria for works of literature to be considered as eco-fiction. He lists the following as conditions for inclusion in the genre:

1. The nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history.
2. The human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest.
3. Human accountability to the environment is part of the text's ethical orientation.
4. Some sense of the environment as a process rather than a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text.[1]

Bernard Werber, one of France's best-selling authors,[2] undoubtedly qualifies as an author of eco-fiction, since most of his novels and short stories develop against the backdrop of mankind's relationships with other species or, more generally, their environment. Another constant element in his stories is a near-future setting, which also qualifies him as an author of science fiction. If, however, we follow Margaret Atwood's classification,[3] it seems more suitable to understand Werber's work as speculative fiction rather than science fiction, since his plots are situated in an imaginable future and are based on existing knowledge.

In France, definitions of science fiction have tended to be broad, with the aim of putting this marginalized genre on a par with more canonical forms of writing. George Slusser notes that author and promoter of the genre Gérard Klein gave *Alice in Wonderland* as a model for science fiction.[4] In the twenty-first century, French science fiction has gained momentum and permeated mainstream literature. Michel Houellebecq (the most read writer of fiction in France in 2015,[5] and revered by literati as a recipient of the *Prix Goncourt*), though not perceived as an author of science fiction, considers some of his novels as *romans d'anticipation*—the nearest equivalent in French to speculative fiction.[6] Science fiction and its neighboring genres are undoubtedly growing in France, and environmental themes are woven into many of their narratives.

Werber—listed as an author of science fiction in bookshop catalogues, and frequently cited by journalists as an author of science fiction—seems to

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be surprisingly overlooked by academic specialists. As Stéphane Manfrédo notes, "on oublie souvent que Bernard Werber […] écrit de la science-fiction!".[7] With eighteen novels, two volumes of short stories, two plays and a range of other publications to date (comic strips, experimental books, films, blogs, videogames), Werber straddles most popular genres that engage audiences, but rarely abandons the theme of humans and their relationships to their natural environment, and generally places the narratives of his human protagonists in a non-human context. The novels of this eclectically inspired author thus deserve to be seen as speculative eco-fiction.

In spite of its commercial success, Werber's work has received limited critical acclaim. This is no surprise though, since both genres associated with his fiction have been considered poor relatives of mainstream literature in France since their emergence. In the twenty-first century, French science fiction has gained interest and status, and has succeeded in liberating itself from strong American influences, as is proven by the rich texts of literature about the future, and by the publication of academic books and journals.[8] French 'green' fiction is still largely associated with North American authors though. Post-World-War-Two French authors of fiction who explored relationships between human beings and the natural world (Marguerite Yourcenar, Romain Gary, Didier Decoin, Yves Berger) were strongly influenced by American literature. French nature novels were prominent in the first half of the twentieth century and are still present today, but they tend to celebrate values of rural or pastoral France instead of giving visibility to environmental consciousness. Even authors who celebrate the natural world, continuing a tradition going back to Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) and Georges Sand (1804–76), often mention their debt to American nature writers.[9]

Werber is neglected in spheres of high culture for myriad reasons. His outputs do not fit the expectations of Parisian critics, who favor psychological or social narratives over speculative fiction, as the author himself points out.[10] Werber's style, prioritizing a clear expression of ideas, does not belong to the dominant practice of French fictional writing, which is stylistically more sophisticated. For instance, Werber recurrently uses repetition and anaphoric/cataphoric/exophoric references as instruments of cohesion for connecting chapters or dimensions. He often refers to a protagonist from preceding or future chapters with just a pronoun, and also uses a pronoun to introduce a mysterious character, such as in *Le père de nos pères* (1998), with *IL* and *ELLE* referring to the unknown earliest human ancestors.[11] These transparent and ruthlessly effective techniques do not charm highbrow intellectuals, as critic François Busnel asserted early in the novelist's career:

Son point faible, c'est l'écriture. Une écriture rapide, brutale, qui vise l'efficacité au détriment du style mais qui trop souvent bascule dans le simplisme et les clichés. […] Werber, c'est la prime à l'imagination débridée, à l'insolence narrative, aux constructions à vous couper le souffle.[12]

Werber's preference for the *roman à thèse* has deterred the film industry from producing adaptations of his work, and his fiction does not correspond to the canon of French novels—largely perceived as intellectually distant from popular culture. His work does not fit accepted genres of French literature, such as crime fiction (Fred Vargas, Pierre Lemaitre), social satire (Michel Houellebecq), intimate literature (Christine Angot, Amélie Nothomb, Marie Darrieussecq), and the thriller (Jean-Christophe Grangé). Werber's bestsellers draw on several genres, from detective fiction to the encyclopedia, straddling what the French have called *la littérature d'imagination scientifique* for a century.[13] At a time when authors' writing identity is linked to a subgenre (of which there are many in ecological speculative fiction, ranging from cli-fi to cyberpunk), Werber's eclectic approach and punchy journalistic style can disconcert critics of all stripes. The reception of his work beyond France has been mixed: he has been successful in Japan, Russia, and South Korea, but largely ignored by the English-speaking world. In Jim Dwyer's *Guide to Ecofiction*,[14] which gives a rare overview of international ecofiction, Werber is absent from a brief list of twentieth-century French-speaking authors, despite having been one of France's few voices of ecofiction since the 1990s. In this article, I will situate Werber in the French ecofictional landscape. I intend to highlight the ways in which he departs from his contemporaries' essentially dystopic writing by proposing other modes of thinking as alternatives for a new ecological imagination. For Werber, alterity may take the form of an Other, but it is primarily staged as a strategy for conceptually and culturally eliminating a toxic past. He approaches fiction as a privileged tool to promote the forward movement of humanity by encouraging his readers to shed their ways of thinking, and to consider other species' solutions.

Ecofiction emerged from the Romantics' focus on the natural world in the early nineteenth century. The rapid development of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, and major alterations in the composition of borders and ethnic populations in the US, led to critical views about the consequences of the unstoppable "mechanical age," according to Thomas Carlyle's designation in 1829.[15] Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, poets, novelists, and non-fiction writers responded starkly to these seismic changes in a variety of ways: 1) they highlighted the dangers of societies that took control of scientific discoveries;[16] 2) they mourned the loss of traditional agrarian ways of life;[17] 3) they

evoked the despoiling of the countryside;[18] 4) they praised the healing aspects of a life in balance with the rest of the natural world;[19] 5) they alerted readers to the challenges of an untameable nature, indifferent to the fate of mankind.[20]

In France (a primarily rural country until the Second World War), nostalgic, utopian, and dystopian trends were prevalent well into the mid-twentieth century (Jean Giono, Maurice Genevoix, Henri Bosco), occasionally giving rise to more critical treatments of environmental themes (Marguerite Yourcenar, Robert Merle). Even in the late twentieth century, nostalgic representations of nature were frequent in French fiction (Pierre Moinot, Marie Rouanet, Maryline Desbiolles), and affection for the natural world as a passive object clearly has deep roots in French thought. For instance, Michel Jeury, known for his innovative science fiction in the 1970s, established himself as an author of the *roman du terroir*, praising rural traditional life and harmony with the natural world—an unthinkable combination of genres for an an author writing in English. Even now, many French people have a grandparent from a peasant background, and attachment to the countryside runs deep. In a country of small farms maintained for generations, the land means survival. Typically, this gives rise to a mentality in which the human is raised above the nonhuman: the environment must be controlled; animals are inferior creatures for human use, and caring for them is based on self-interest.

By contrast, in Britain, anti-pastoral literature emerged in the eighteenth century through such poets as George Crabbe (1754–1832), since populations were driven into a world of urbanization for economic reasons or by enclosure laws. The post-industrial era witnessed a desire to reconnect with the natural world, which had been partially destroyed and distanced from city-dwellers' daily experiences. North Americans, whose history has been marked by a drive to conquer nature, have the strongest tradition of nature writing in the world, which is shaped by a concept of wilderness that can define culture. In English-speaking countries, following World War One, new visions of the natural world were conveyed as part of a growth in science fiction—there was a marked shift towards more exploration of space and time linked to social and technological aspects of life on earth. A wave of dystopic depictions (Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, William Golding) and cautionary tales (Ray Bradbury, Clifford Simak) rejected Arcadian views. Nature was no longer an idealized entity—a passively nurturing landscape. It had become a partner and/or a competitor, an environment necessitating efficient interactions to ensure the survival and wellbeing of humanity.

In early twentieth-century France, science fiction was broached by J.-H. Rosny aîné (1856–1940), following the stringent tradition of social Darwinism:

La nature brute intéresse [J.-H. Rosny aîné] surtout dans la mesure où elle est […] capable de le faire vibrer […]. Le droit à la vie que l'homme moderne reconnaît aux autres formes vivantes est donc conditionné […] par un critère esthétique: un phacochère est épargné parce que l'explorateur est "indulgent pour les bêtes bien construites" (*L'étonnant voyage de Hareton Ironcastle*, 79–80) […]. Dans ces récits, Rosny apparaît clairement comme le propagandiste de la pureté des espèces, de la force brutale, de la ruse au nom de la survie du plus apte. (Gouanvic 65)

Not all early French-speaking writers of science fiction committed to such ecological totalitarianism, but it was one of the foundations of the genre. Twentieth-century French fiction involving projections of the future has generally portrayed nature as hostile or indifferent to human beings. For a long period after Rosny, science fiction "est prisonnière du pessimisme eschatologique" (Gouanvic 269). Jules Verne famously showed how the natural world was best controlled by human logic,[21] and Pierre Boulle's work epitomized the dystopic social fables of the middle of the century.[22] Ancestral landscapes, tame animals, beautiful mountains, and sonorous seascapes were represented as a source of comfort, whereas interactions with unknown environments were imbued with fear and tension. Until the 1960s, French science fiction generally forecast (at best) a sad future for humanity, or (at worst) the destruction of Earth. Beginning with the late 1960s, literature about the future developed very fast, as did the mode of its production: utopian novels emerged,[23] but most works of significance were dystopic, masculine-oriented, and heedless of human relationships with environments. If ecology happened to be present in a narrative, it was approached politically and socially, rather than scientifically. Yal Ayerdhal (1959–2015), Pierre Bordage (1955–), Jean-Marc Ligny (1956–), and Serge Lehman (1964–) were the main voices of this new wave—the basis of today's diversified and thriving fiction landscape.

It is somewhat surprising to find that Werber, born in 1961, does not mention being influenced by any French writers from the generation immediately preceding his work. The only French authors who seem to have been formative in his development are Gustave Flaubert, Boris Vian, and Jules Verne—Werber's "premier père spirituel."[24] All of his other adolescent inspiration came from America (Howard Lovecraft, Isaac Asimov, Alfred van Vogt, Brian Herbert) or Britain (Aldous Huxley, John Tolkien). In his early twenties, Werber encountered Philip K. Dick's works:[25]

1982: […] Découverte de Philip K. Dick (nouveau grand choc littéraire). Philip K. Dick éclipse d'un coup toutes mes références littéraires précédentes. Asimov m'avait montré l'intelligence dans la SF, Herbert la mystique, Dick... la folie. Et avec la folie il surpasse les deux précédents. Dick ce n'est plus de la science fiction c'est de la philosophie fiction qui explose la tête.[26]

It is common among French writers of fiction about the future to claim almost exclusively American influences, and to imagine the near future (due to a lack of interest in long-term space travel, and a keenness to anticipate potential socio-political scenarios), but Werber was one of the first authors to feature two aspects that have permeated French writing only in the last decade or so: a strong environmental theme, and a desire to offer potential solutions for intervention in the face of dystopias. He is original because he sets human beings in a space larger than themselves, which develops their awareness of others and their environment, and because his approach is utopian, which is most unusual in an era of doubt and uncertainty (particularly in France, where publishers and the public favor dark political satires). Werber's strategies of comprehension and empathy towards other beings merit consideration before we turn to the optimism of his outputs in the context of contemporary French environmental fiction.

Werber—who is wary of figures of authority and defines himself as an anarchist—does not claim to be an ecologist. Unlike authors who prioritize specific agendas in their content, he does not aim to promote ethical or political messages, even if he states that "la vraie science fiction se pratique au niveau des idées et des morales" (Werber, "Biographie"):

> Je n'aime pas trop le mot écologie, j'aime parler de la vie. Toute personne vivante étant dans la nature est déjà automatiquement dans le système écologique. Pour moi, qu'il y ait un parti écologique est une aberration, c'est comme s'il y avait un parti pour se laver le matin.[27]

This clear statement of detachment from activism is reinforced by several affirmations of his primary interest in humankind, and of his use of non-human beings and settings as instruments: "Les fourmis [dans *Les fourmis* (1991)] ne sont qu'un prétexte pour disposer d'une vision avec recul sur l'humanité et montrer comment une autre espèce terrienne a trouvé d'autres solutions par rapport aux problèmes de la vie dans les grandes cités" (Werber, "Biographie"). Werber, without inserting arguments that would transform his books into ecological propaganda, leaves room for alterity. Many of his protagonists are non-human: in the *Fourmis* trilogy (1991–96),[28] characterful ants are as numerous as humans; in the *Troisième humanité* trilogy (2012–14), genetically modified creatures appear in *Troisième humanité* (2012) and *Les micro-humains* (2013). Moreover, *La voix de la Terre* (2014) has Earth as one of the main protagonists.[29] Werber's fiction is also populated by many silent beings, organisms, and plants—from trees to giraffes. They are important agents in his stories (however fleetingly), and he uses a palette of strategies to bring attention to the ways in which humans interact with other beings and

their environments, as well as imagining and suggesting how they could interact in the future. Five of these strategies deserve closer analysis.

First, Werber offers insertions beyond the main narrative, such as objective statements about non-human beings, who are generally at the mercy of selfish, greedy or poorly developed humans. These statements are often given legitimacy by their inclusion in pseudo-scientific tracts, as with the fictive *Encyclopédie du savoir relatif et absolu* that is fragmentarily integrated into the ants novels. Werber uses the voice of scientist Edmond Wells to propound what scientists often refute as unacceptably anthropocentric views about matters such as pain in ants:

> Les fourmis sont-elles capables de souffrir? A priori non. […] mais ce concept est faux. Car la fourmi émet une odeur particulière. L'odeur de la douleur. […] Elle sait quand il lui manque un morceau, et elle souffre. Elle souffre à sa manière, qui est sûrement fort différente de la nôtre, mais elle souffre. (Werber, *Fourmis* 138–39)

Scientific protagonists frequently volunteer information about human beings' unnecessarily cruel attitudes to animals, as in *L'ultime secret* (2001)—a novel based on the idea of artificial intelligence—when one of the protagonists comments as an aside that a traditional method for amassing an aphrodisiacal powder involves repeatedly breaking does' legs, so that the endorphins secreted by the animals to calm their pain can be collected.[30]

Another of Werber's strategies to engage readers with others is to use analogies relating to human life. In *L'ultime secret*, Werber introduces the controversial topic of animal experimentation by portraying a cruelly experimented-upon mouse's fight for life in parallel with the tribulations of Lucrèce Nemrod (an investigative journalist who appears in *Le père de nos pères* and *L'ultime secret*), whose nickname as a child was "la petite souris" (Werber, *Père* 45), and who escapes from unscrupulous scientists (Werber, *Secret* 242–61).

A third strategy is used to heighten the visibility of vulnerable others: Werber weaves his plots around human institutions where anti-environmental activities or cruel treatments of sentient beings take place, and gives information about how they are run with startlingly crude detail. In *Le père de nos pères*, "une sorte de polar paélontologique" (Werber, *Père* 27) set in the near future, the powerful owners of a meat-processing factory try to suppress scientific revelations about pigs being a branch of humanity's ancestry. Werber shockingly evokes methods and statistics regarding animal slaughtering; evidence that stressed animals produce toxic meat; and accounts of inhumane working conditions for the workers in the abattoir (Werber, *Père* 150–57; 366–70). This grisly information is embedded in a fast-paced narrative that is

peppered with ironic remarks, jokes, and interspecies proverbs: "ma mère disait qu'il y a un proverbe chez les porcs-épics: 'tout seul on a froid, trop près on se pique'" (Werber, *Terre* 582).

A fourth strategy entails the highly effective inclusion of alterity as an instrument of thought, rather than in physical form. From his first novel onwards, he has advocated that "[l]a meilleure voie pour renouveler la pensée est de sortir de l'imagination humaine" (Werber, *Fourmis* 262). Werber also encourages observing anybody and anything that is part of human environments, from ants to the soil, opening the door to lateral thinking, which is key to harmonious evolution. Werber, a keen advocate of interactivity with his readers since the time of his first novels, encourages external input through the "Vous" section of his website, where readers and fans can post their dreams, jokes, *anti-proverbs*, letters, suggestions for new themes, and answers to surveys.[31]

Finally, Werber makes projections into the future as a way of stepping into otherness, augmenting feelings of alterity by working with the twenty-first-century scientific concept of time as a relative notion. Without evoking time travelling or distorted views of time, as occurs with many writers of science fiction, Werber sharpens his readers' sense of relativity by asking them to step into the near future. They thus become more aware of their present values, habits, modes of perception, and environmental circumstances, and are given impetus to engage individually in changing the world for the better. *La voix de la Terre* begins with a cautionary note:

AVERTISSEMENT

Cette histoire se déroule dans un temps relatif et non dans un temps absolu. Elle se passe exactement vingt ans après l'instant où vous ouvrirez ce roman et commencerez à le lire. (Werber, *Terre* n.p.)

Werber is significantly innovative with his emphasis on the extent to which the human perception of absolute time is deluded: his interspecies representation of time serves as a reminder that humans are just one species among many, and that their ways are not universal. Humans can deepen their understanding of the world by becoming more aware of how other species have a relativized perception of something that appears absolute and universal to them:

La perception de l'écoulement du temps est très différente chez les humains et chez les fourmis. Pour les humains, le temps est absolu. Quoi qu'il arrive, les secondes seront de taille et de périodicité égales.

Chez les fourmis, en revanche, le temps est relatif. Quand il fait chaud, les secondes sont très courtes. Quand il fait froid, elles s'étirent et s'allongent à l'infini, jusqu'à la perte de conscience hibernale.

> Ce temps élastique leur donne une perception de la vitesse très différente de la nôtre. Pour définir un mouvement, les insectes n'utilisent pas seulement l'espace et la durée, ils ajoutent une troisième dimension: la température.[32]

This multidimensional conception of time reveals a spiritual understanding—be it in relation to death, the origin of humanity, or a particular species (ants)—that depends on an entity's level of consciousness. Time is thus a means for living beings to evolve and to take an active part in life's movements, in which it is the common ground and "le principal prédateur" (Werber, *Fourmis* 194).

To conclude, one of the key features that Werber considers vital in order for humanity to evolve in harmony with its environment is the link between time and forgetfulness, which a jump into the future can trigger. In 1971, composer Pierre Boulez published an article praising amnesia.[33] The possibility of forgetting what has been learned, of starting from a mind that is a *tabula rasa* shorn of the burden of received values and traditions, is as key to human existence as the ability to remember knowledge and skills. In an era of increasingly gloomy cultural production, it is refreshing to encounter Werber's enthusiasm about dissolving narrow approaches to the world by way of future-oriented fiction (even if he may appear to be a little over-optimistic):

> Selon moi, la fonction d'un auteur de science-fiction remplace la fonction d'astrologue, de chamane, de directeur de plan quinquennal. Dans toutes les cultures et à travers les siècles, il a toujours existé des gens qui étaient chargés de voir le futur. Ces fonctions, souvent ridiculisées, sont aujourd'hui délaissées. Cette tâche revient désormais aux auteurs de science-fiction.[34]

Werber's model of a future utopia necessitates the development of harmonious relationships with humankind's surroundings:

> Chaque fois que les humains élargissent leur concept de "congénères" pour y inclure des catégories nouvelles, c'est qu'ils considèrent que des êtres estimés jusque-là inférieurs sont en fait suffisamment semblables à eux pour être dignes de leur compassion. Dès lors ce ne sont pas seulement ces êtres qui passent ainsi un cap, c'est l'humanité toute entière qui franchit un niveau d'évolution.[35]

For Werber, the will to evolve is all that humanity needs in order to establish a new era.

Since Werber published his first novel in 1991, the French landscape of fiction about the future has grown considerably with regard to quantity and diversity, but the focus of most French writers on national or global matters tends to eclipse environmental concerns, as Simon Bréan aptly notes about

science fiction from the 1990s.[36] When the natural world is shown to interact with humankind in the future, it is typically in terms of harshly dystopic encounters or exterminations—as in the six volumes of the *Autre-monde* cycle of popular writer Maxime Chattam,[37] Céline Minard's post-apocalyptic novel[38] or Jeanne-A Debats's fantasy.[39] Werber is the lone voice of ecological utopias in France. He constructs a human and non-human imaginary that is committed to a positive outcome for a shared world. Werber's ideals correspond to what philosopher Rosi Braidotti designates "posthuman affirmative politics." Werber's work is driven by "the pursuit of collective projects aimed at the affirmation of hope, […] [which] is a way of dreaming up possible futures: an anticipatory virtue that permeates our lives and activates them."[40] Postindustrial popular culture frequently promotes positivity with regard to difference. It gives visibility to the existence of others and can exhort meaningful interactions between humans and their environment. Yet, as many thinkers from Theodor Adorno (1991) to Noël Sturgeon (2008) have shown,[41] it also thrives on turning alterity into marketable, consumable, and disposable commodities. Werber proposes to use alterity as a strategy for thinking beyond human limitations. It requires interspecies connectivity and awareness of the natural world, and leads to dreams of harmonious interactions between human beings and their environment.

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Notes

1. Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1995), 7-8.
2. Bernard Werber has sold more than 30 million books in France and other countries since the publication of his first novel in 1991. Bernard Werber and Philippe Vallet, "Bernard Werber: *Le sixième sommeil*," *France Info* (October 16, 2015), http://z.umn.edu/1a59.
3. For Margaret Atwood, science fiction is fiction based on events that cannot happen at the time of publishing a book; speculative fiction, by contrast, imagines events and narratives from existing scientific knowledge. Discussing *Oryx and Crake*, her novel about bioengineering, she states that it "invents nothing we haven't already invented or started to invent"—it simply imagines what could happen with the use of existing technologies. Margaret Atwood, "Writing *Oryx and Crake*," *Writing with Intent: Essays, Reviews, Personal Prose, 1983–2005* (New York, NY: Carroll and Graf, 2005), 285.
4. George Slusser, "French Science Fiction: The Occluded Genre," *Science Fiction Studies*, 23:2 (1996): 283.
5. Alice Develey, "Michel Houellebecq est l'auteur français le plus lu en 2015," *LeFigaro.fr* (February 17, 2016), http://z.umn.edu/1a5a.
6. Michel Houellebecq and Josyane Savigneau, "Michel Houellebecq: 'Tout ce que la science permet sera réalisé,'" *LeMonde.fr* (November 8, 2010), http://z.umn.edu/1a5b.
7. Stéphane Manfrédo, *La science-fiction* (Paris: Le Cavalier Bleu, 2005), 74.
8. Natacha Vas-Deyres, *Ces Français qui ont écrit demain: Utopie, anticipation et science-fiction au XX^e siècle* (Paris: Champion, 2012). Simon Bréan, *La science-fiction en France:*

Théorie et histoire d'une littérature (Paris: Presses de l'université Paris-Sorbonne, 2012). Irène Langlet, "Étudier la science-fiction en France aujourd'hui," *ReS Futurae*, 1 (2012), https://resf.revues.org/181.

9. Jean Giono, *Pour saluer Melville* (Paris: Gallimard, 1941). Maurice Genevoix recalls in an interview that the attitude of his protagonist Fernand d'Aubel in *Un jour* (1976) "rejoint celle des Américains de l'école de Thoreau et du Whitman des *Feuilles d'herbe*. J'ai beaucoup d'admiration pour Thoreau, Whitman […], pour tous ceux qui ont réagi contre les excès de la civilisation mécanique." Maurice Genevoix and Jacques Jaubert, "Maurice Genevoix s'explique (juin 1979, *Lire* no 46)," in *Les grands entretiens de "Lire,"* Pierre Assouline, ed. (Paris: Omnibus, 2000), 317.
10. Bernard Werber and Marie-Laure Germon, "Plaidoyer pour 'une autre littérature,'" *Le Figaro.fr* (November 23, 2007), http://z.umn.edu/1a5d.
11. Bernard Werber, *Le père de nos pères* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998).
12. François Busnel, "Le cas Werber," *L'Express.fr* (November 15, 2001), http://z.umn.edu/1a5f.
13. Jean-Jacques Bridenne, *La littérature française d'imagination scientifique* (Paris: Dassonville, 1950). Daniel Fondanèche, *La littérature d'imagination scientifique* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012). Jean-Marc Gouanvic, *La science-fiction française au XX^e^ siècle (1900–1968): Essai de socio-poétique d'un genre en émergence* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994).
14. Jim Dwyer, *Where the Wild Books Are: A Field Guide to Ecofiction* (Reno: U of Nevada P, 2010).
15. Thomas Carlyle, "Signs of the Times," *Edinburgh Review*, 49 (1829): 442.
16. Herbert G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (London: Heinemann, 1896); *The War of the Worlds* (London: Heinemann, 1898).
17. Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1878).
18. Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows* (London: Methuen, 1908).
19. Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1854). Hamilton W. Mabie, *A Child of Nature* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1901).
20. Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (New York: Harper, 1851). William H. Hudson, *A Crystal Age* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1887).
21. Jules Verne, *Maître du monde* (Paris: Hetzel, 1904); *L'invasion de la mer* (Paris: Hetzel, 1905).
22. Pierre Boulle, *La planète des singes* (Paris: Julliard, 1963).
23. René Barjavel, *La nuit des temps* (Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1968).
24. Bernard Werber and Jérôme Dupuis, "Bernard Werber: 'Son nom apparaît au moins une fois dans chacun de mes romans,'" *L'Express.fr* (January 31, 2005), http://z.umn.edu/1a5g.
25. Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (New York: Doubleday, 1968) [*Robot blues*, S. Quadruppani, trans. (Paris: Champ Libre, 1976)]; *A Scanner Darkly* (New York: Doubleday, 1977) [*Substance Mort*, R. Louit, trans. (Paris: Denoël, 1978)].
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